

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BONN 11526 01 OF 02 081707Z

47

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SCCT-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 IO-13 /081 W

----- 058503

P R 081655Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0281

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 11526

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINTS GW WB

SUBJECT: NATIONAL POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ACCUSED
TERRORISTS ESCAPE IN BERLIN

REF: USBER 1399

SUMMARY. AS COULD BE EXPECTED IN THE MIDDLE OF A
NATIONAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, THE ESCAPE OF FOUR
ACCUSED TERRORISTS FROM A BERLIN PRISON ON JULY 7
QUICKLY BECAME A DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUE. CDU/CSU
CHANCELLOR-CANDIDATE KOHL CALLED THE ESCAPE "AN
UNPRECEDENTED SCANDAL" AND A CDU BUNDESTAG DEPUTY HAS
SUBMITTED A PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION IN ORDER TO PUT
THE GOVERNMENT ON THE SPOT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BONN 11526 01 OF 02 081707Z

WHILE THE GERMAN PRESS IN GENERAL HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF THE BERLIN AUTHORITIES, THAT PART OF THE MEDIA WHICH SYMPATHIZES WITH THE OPPOSITION, SUCH AS THE SPRINGER PRESS, HAS REALLY HAD A HEYDAY. THE FACT THAT THE BREAK-OUT APPEARS TO BE AN INSIDE JOB HAS LED TO CALLS FOR INCREASED SUPERVISION OVER MEETINGS BETWEEN ACCUSED TERRORISTS AND THEIR DEFENSE ATTORNEYS. IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASSESS THE FULL POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ESCAPE BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS INCIDENT IS A BOON TO THE OPPOSITION PARTIES IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY.

1. WITHIN HOURS OF THE BREAKOUT OF FOUR ACCUSED TERRORISTS FROM MOABIT PRISON IN BERLIN, THE ESCAPE BECAME A POLITICAL FOOTBALL. CDU/CSU CHANCELLOR-CANDIDATE KOHL CALLED IT AN UNPRECEDENTED SCANDAL AND SAID IT SHINES A SPOTLIGHT ON THE SECURITY SITUATION NOT ONLY IN BERLIN BUT IN THE WHOLE FEDERAL REPUBLIC.

THE OPPOSITION PRESS ALSO IS MAKING CONSIDER-ABLE POLITICAL CAPITAL OUT OF THE AFFAIR.

2. THE UNION PARTIES CLEARLY WANT TO USE THE ESCAPE TO DISCREDIT THE SOCIAL-LIBERAL COALITION IN BONN, AS WELL AS IN BERLIN. BERLIN CDU BUNDESTAG DEPUTY WOHLRABE HAS ALREADY SUBMITTED A TWO-PART PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION IN THE BUNDESTAG. ALTHOUGH THE BUNDESTAG IS IN SUMMER RECESS THE GOVERNMENT IS REQUIRED TO REPLY IN WRITING TO QUESTIONS WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT YET CERTAIN WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WILL DO SO BEFORE THE OCTOBER 3 ELECTION. THE GIST OF WOHLRABE'S QUESTION IS (A) WHAT MEASURES DID THE GOVERNMENT TAKE TO ENSURE THAT THE PRISONERS HAD BEEN SECURELY CONFINED IN BERLIN AND (B) HOW WAS SUCH AN ESCAPE POSSIBLE IN VIEW OF THE EXPERIENCE GAINED BY THE AUTHORITIES IN HANDLING SUCH CASES.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BONN 11526 02 OF 02 081709Z

47

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SCCT-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 IO-13 /081 W

----- 058535

P R 081655Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0282

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 11526

3. PUBLICLY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN RESTRAINED IN ITS COMMENTS. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN BOELLING SAID SIMPLY THAT THE CHANCELLOR HAD RECEIVED THE NEWS WITH SORROW. PUBLIC STATEMENTS ASIDE, HOWEVER, THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN BONN IS FURIOUS. BOTH FRIDERICHS AND MAIHOFFER WERE SARCASTIC ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR FELLOW FDP POLITICIAN, HERMANN OXFORT, THE SENATOR FOR JUSTICE IN BERLIN. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, OXFORT TOLD FDP CHAIRMAN GENSCHER THAT HE WAS THINKING ABOUT RESIGNING BUT THAT GENSCHER HAD DISCOURAGED HIM FROM DOING SO.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BONN 11526 02 OF 02 081709Z

4. THE FACT THAT THE FOUR ESCAPEES HAD ASSISTANCE HAS LED TO RESURFACING OF THE IDEA THAT ALL MEETINGS BETWEEN ACCUSED TERRORISTS AND THEIR ATTORNEYS SHOULD BE SUPERVISED BY A COURT OFFICIAL. CIVIL LIBERTARIANS AND THE GERMAN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION HAVE OPPOSED THESE MEASURES BUT IT WILL BE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO DO SO IN LIGHT OF THE POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF THE DEFENSE LAWYERS WITH THE MOABIT ESCAPE.

5. IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASSESS THE FULL POLITICAL

IMPLICATIONS OF THE MOABIT BREAKOUT BUT IT IS CLEARLY
A BOON FOR THE UNION PARTIES IN THE BUNDESTAG ELECTION
CAMPAIGN. IN SUCH A HARD-FOUGHT, CLOSE ELECTION SUCH
INCIDENTS TAKE ON INCREASED POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE.
SCHMIDT AND THE GOVERNMENT WERE JUST BEGINNING TO
RELAX FOLLOWING THE ISRAELI ACTION IN ENTEBBE WHEN
THEY ONCE AGAIN FOUND THEMSELVES ON THE DEFENSIVE
AGAINST CHARGES THAT THE GOVERNMENT WASN'T TOUGH
ENOUGH ON TERRORISTS.
HILLENBRAND

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, TERRORISTS, FUGITIVES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BONN11526
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760263-0801
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760781/aaaacswu.tel
Line Count: 179
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31 MAR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <13 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NATIONAL POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ACCUSED TERRORISTS ESCAPE IN BERLIN
TAGS: PINS, PINT, GE, WB
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006